

The Commoner.

Vol. I. No. 28.

Lincoln, Nebraska, August 2, 1901.

\$1.00 a Year

Admiral Schley.

When the first news reached the American people concerning the Santiago naval battle the impression was that Admiral Sampson was the real hero of the occasion. This was due to the fact that Admiral Sampson sent to the president a message in which he said that "the fleet under my command" offered the American nation the Santiago victory as a Fourth of July present. But as soon as the newspaper reports and the statements of eye witnesses came in, it developed that Admiral Sampson, while theoretically in command of the American fleet, was at least twelve miles from the scene of battle, and that it was Admiral Schley who commanded and led the splendid fight. Immediately a systematic attack was opened upon Schley, although that great sailor did not indulge in boasting of any character. In reply to a question he said "there is glory enough in this victory for all of us." Since then the adherents of Sampson and the administration politicians have kept the newspapers filled with things intended to discredit Schley, but that officer has maintained a dignified silence.

Finally, because of formal and serious attacks made upon him, Admiral Schley has been forced, in defense of his manhood, to demand a court of inquiry. His statement to the newspapers after having demanded this court of inquiry are characteristic of the man. He said, "It is a very great pity that there should be a controversy over matters wherein everybody did his best." How different this is from the attitude assumed by the enemies of Admiral Schley.

It is indeed a very great pity that there should be any controversy over a matter wherein the world has given credit where credit belongs. It is indeed a pity that there should be any controversy that seeks to discredit a brave, honorable and modest sea-fighter, who successfully led the American forces in one of the greatest, if not the greatest, naval battles in the history of the world. It is indeed a very great pity that the politicians and the bureaucrats having the favor of this administration should insist upon discrediting and abusing a man who has served his country so faithfully as Winfield Scott Schley has served the United States of America.

Admiral Sampson's friends should be satisfied with the fact that their favorite obtained the prize money won in a battle in which he did not participate, and that his fate is to grace a medal that is to commemorate a fight in which he did not take part. It should be sufficient for them that Admiral Schley has never made any claim as to his part in the great battle in Santiago Bay; that he has been content

for the newspaper correspondents and other witnesses to give the facts to the American people. The difficulty is that these statements have convinced the American people that Schley was the real hero of the day and entitled to all the honors at the hands of a grateful people, even though he is denied the emoluments in the way of prize money and medals.

Equality in Taxation.

The Ohio democratic platform demands that railroad and street car lines shall bear their fair share of taxation. The plank reads as follows:

"Steam and electric railroads and other corporations possessing public franchises shall be assessed in the same proportion to their salable value as are farms and city real estate."

Who will deny the proposition therein stated? Who will assume to suggest a different basis of assessment? The railroad enjoys the right of eminent domain; it can take any property it wants for railroad purposes. The state surrenders to it enough of sovereignty to enable it to demand any man's land, even his homestead, upon the tender of its salable value. The street car line enjoys a valuable franchise, usually secured from the people's representatives without the knowledge of the people themselves. Why should the ordinary individual, who receives from his government no franchises, bonuses, subsidies, or special privileges, pay taxes upon the full value of his land, while the railroads and the street car lines pay taxes on but a small per cent of the value of their property? Why should the farmer be compelled to pay taxes on the full value upon his horses, cattle, hogs, and other walking stock, while railroads and street car lines pay on but a small per cent of the value of their rolling stock? Mayor Johnson is responsible for the insertion of this plank, and it is eminently just. The candidates upon the state ticket can afford to challenge their opponents to discuss this proposition before the people of their state. Equality before the law is a maxim that is being more and more ignored. The democrats of Ohio are to be congratulated upon their attempts to revive this principle in state affairs. They would have been wiser if they had applied it to national affairs as well.

A Just Criticism.

On another page will be found an extended quotation from the United States Investor. If a democratic paper had used the same language in regard to the methods employed by banks it would have been denounced by the financial organs and accused of stirring up discontent, but this conservative republican paper says

nothing that is not apparent to everyone who will investigate. The banks make plenty of money in ordinary times, and yet they are not safe in times of panic. Men who handle trust funds have no right to risk them in speculation, and we need more stringent laws for the regulation of banks, but how can we secure safe banking so long as the bankers exercise a controlling influence over politics? The editor of THE COMMONER, when a member of congress, tried to secure the enactment of a law taxing national bank deposits to raise a fund to guarantee depositors against loss, but it was defeated by the banking influence. The Investor's article is worthy of careful and thoughtful consideration.

Democratic Remedy for Trusts.

Mr. Louis F. Post, one of the best of men, editor of the Public, one of the most valuable of our weekly papers, takes the editor of THE COMMONER to task for suggesting again the trust remedy proposed by him more than a year ago, and endorsed by the Kansas City convention. Mr. Post is so conscientious in his criticism that he deserves more attention than those who find fault merely for the pleasure it gives them to do so.

The remedy proposed by Mr. Bryan is, briefly, that, in addition to state legislation, there should be a federal law shutting the corporation up in the state of its origin, or prohibiting it from engaging in interstate commerce, until it shows that there is no water in its stock and that it is not trying to monopolize any branch of business or the production of any article of merchandise. After enumerating the remedies above suggested Mr. Post says:

"These propositions, coming from a democrat to the democracy—though Mr. Bryan has proposed them before, and thereby smoothed the way for them—must be at least disturbing to men who shrink from the republican tendency, already alarmingly strong, to centralize all power in the national government; while those who dread the advances of socialism, must be aghast at this democratic proposition to strengthen enormously the foundations already laid for making of the American government a great socialistic state. All these proposals for federal action are centralizing, federalistic, and in an objectionable sense socialistic, save only one—that with reference to the abolition of protection for trust-made goods. Judged only by his remedy Mr. Bryan might fairly be supposed to have decided the issue of competition versus socialism against competition. Yet that is not what he intends to do. He believes that this complex machinery in restraint of free trade would extinguish private monopoly."

Laws must deal with conditions and under present conditions it is impossible to deal with the trust question completely by means of state laws. A state can prevent the organiza-